DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 094 804 JC 740 260

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TITLE To Determine If a Relationship Exists Between Success on the Job and How Students Rate the Overall Cooperative Education Program.
INSTITUTION Nova Univ., Fort Lauderdale, Fla.
PUB DATE Dec 73
NOTE 17p.; Practicum presented to Nova University in partial fulfillment of requirements for Doctor of Education degree

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.75 HC-$1.50 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS *Community Colleges; Comparative Analysis; *Cooperative Programs; Evaluation Techniques; Post Secondary Education; Practicums; Questionnaires; *Student Employment; *Student Reaction; Work Study Programs
IDENTIFIERS California; *Los Angeles Valley College

ABSTRACT

To determine whether students who indicated success on the job evaluated the overall Cooperative Education Program at Los Angeles Valley College differently from those students who did not indicate job success, data were collected from 249 students who had completed the program (41 percent female and 59 percent male). Questionnaires were answered by the students at the close of each of three semesters. An evaluation form was completed by the students during the final class session of each semester. The data were classified according to ratings of "successful" and "unsuccessful" students and program ratings of "Excellent" or "Needs Improvement." The chi-square technique was used to compare the two groups of "Successful" and "Unsuccessful" students. The findings showed that the students who succeeded on the job rated the Cooperative Education Program "Excellent" more often than did students who had not succeeded. An appendix provides a copy of the questionnaire. (DB)

ED 094804

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TO DETERMINE IF A RELATIONSHIP EXISTS BETWEEN SUCCESS ON THE JOB AND HOW STUDENTS RATE THE OVERALL COOPERATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CORE MODULE

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A PRACTICUM PRESENTED TO NOVA UNIVERSITY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

NOVA UNIVERSITY

DECEMBER 1973

JC 740 260

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I. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Cooperative Education is an educational program of planned vocational work experience requiring an agreement between a student, an employer and the college. It is unique in that students are given credit according to how many hours per semester they spend on the job. All cooperative agreements include the provision that students must be exposed to new learning experiences on the job. Concurrent enrollment in regular college classes is also required.

Experience has indicated that in the eyes of most Cooperative Education students, the most important measures of success on the job are promotions and pay raises. Therefore, it should be expected that ratings of the Cooperative Education Program by students related to success on the job.

In the past, the Cooperative Education Job Placement Report at Los Angeles Valley College included a question asking students to rate the overall program; Excellent, Good, Fair and Needs Improvement. On the same form, the students were asked to indicate several types of success on the job. Success was indicated by such achievements as pay raises and promotions.

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine whether students who indicated success on the job evaluated the overall Cooperative Education Program any differently than students who did not indicate success on the job.

II. HYPOTHESIS

Success on the job results in a higher rating by students of the overall Cooperative Education Program. Stated as a null-hypothesis: success on-the-job is independent of student ratings of the Cooperative Education Program.

III. BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

Los Angeles Valley College is one of two public Los Angeles Community Colleges situated in the San Fernando Valley of Southern California. The college enrollment is approximately 20,000 day and evening students. The student body is generally described as being middle to upper middle class. Sixty-five percent of the students are from families with an income greater than $10,000 per year. Less than 13 percent of the student body are from minority groups.

In the fall of 1970 Valley College initiated a program of Co-operative Education funded under the Vocational Education Act of 1968 (Part G) P.L. 90-576. In the succeeding three years the program expanded to an enrollment of over 400 students per semester. Although the program has been successful in terms of increased enrollment, such figures are not necessarily valid indicators of the program's educational value.

Evaluation is an integral part of any new program and is mandatory in federally funded programs. Accordingly, an evaluation procedure was developed and administered during the spring of 1972 and the following two semesters. An important component of this procedure was evaluated by students enrolled in the program. In this survey

sixty-five percent of the respondents rated the program as excellent while five percent rated the program as needing improvement. During the same period twenty percent gained promotions and forty-two percent received pay increases. Complete interpretation of the data must include an attempt to determine if such successes were related to how the student evaluated the program

Survey of the Literature

A survey of the literature reveals only general data regarding student evaluation of Cooperative Education Programs. Peter G. Haines,[1] Frank W. Lanhan, and Edwin J. Weber[2] all writing in Business Education Forum touched on the subject of evaluation but did not give any results. Studies by Brockman in 1972, Fielstra in 1960 and Kimbrell in 1969[3] are only slightly more specific mentioning success on the job as one of the helpful aspects of Cooperative Education in the high school. However, success was not precisely defined.

Only one of several reports received from ERIC regarding evaluations by students was slightly informative.[4] This, like many of

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[1]Peter G. Haines, "The Reality of Job Experience Projects," Business Education Forum, February, 1972, Vol. 26, No. 5, pp. 24-25.

[2]Frank W. Lanhan and Edwin J. Weber, "Cooperative Occupational Training Programs Need Quality Control," Business Education Forum, May, 1970, Vol. 24, No. 8, pp. 11-13.

[3]Robert L. Bennett, Educational Work Experience in Cooperative Education (San Mateo, California: Action-Link Education Systems, 1973), p. 118.

[4]Coast Community College District; San Mateo Community College District, Community College Vocational Cooperative Education Exemplary Project in Vocational Education. First Annual Report, November 1, 1971 (Bureau of Adult, Vocational, and Technical Education DHEW/OE, Washington, D.C.), pp. 40-41.

the reports reviewed by the researchers, merely displayed sample evaluation forms with little or no statistical data which paralleled this study.

IV. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

Several of the terms used in this research report require precise definition. Other terms may be unfamiliar to the reader and, therefore, are included in the listing which follows:

Convenience sample: A convenience sample restricts the study to only those answering the survey.

Ex Post Facto Research: Interpretation after the survey has been completed is called ex post facto research.

Success: The term "Success" in the study means that the student received, during the semester in question, both a pay raise and promotion on the job.

Pay Raise: The term was not rigidly defined; students were simply asked if they received a raise in pay during the semester.

Promotion: The term was not rigidly defined; students were merely asked if they had received a promotion on the job during the semester.

Student: The term "Student" refers to any person enrolled in Cooperative Education whether primarily attending school in the day or evening.

Student Evaluation: An Evaluation of the program by a participating student.

V. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study was based on student evaluations of the Cooperative Education Program at Los Angeles Valley College for the spring semester 1972 and the succeeding school year. Cooperative Education agreements between colleges and employers vary. To be eligible for Cooperative Education at Los Angeles Valley College, students are required to concurrently enroll for more units than at most other colleges. Therefore, results of this study do not necessarily hold true for other colleges.

This was an ex post facto research project, the limitations of which include: a) the inability to manipulate independent variables, b) the lack of power to randomize, and c) the risk of improper interpretation.[5] A convenience sample was used which means the sample includes only people responding to the survey. The conditions under which the data were collected included: completion of the evaluation form during a regular class period, and the requirement that the evaluations be identified with the student's name. Both of these may have caused biased answers.

Because the sample was historical in nature, it was impossible to survey a similar sample of working students not enrolled in the Cooperative Education Program over the same period of time.

Students from Administration of Justice were excluded because requirements for a job promotion and pay raise are regulated by a time

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[5]Fred N. Kerlinger, Foundations of Behavioral Research (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1965), pp. 359-374.

and test procedure. Furthermore, the large number of students in this discipline (25 percent) would have severely affected the results.

It is important to note that the study sample includes only about two-thirds of the students participating in the Cooperative Education Program. Again, because of the historical nature of this report, it was impossible to obtain the missing data.

VI. BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

There were five basic assumptions in this study. First, it was assumed that the respondents to the questionnaire evaluated the program and not some other external factor. Secondly, it was assumed that the respondents were truthful in indicating promotions and pay raises. Thirdly, it was assumed that the sample of students was representative of the total population of Cooperative Education students at Los Angeles Valley College. Fourth, it was assumed that Administration of Justice students were not representative of all students in the Cooperative Education Program and therefore were excluded from this study. Finally, it was assumed that the program content and basic format did not change significantly over the period in which the sample was collected.

VII. PROCEDURES FOR COLLECTING DATA

The data for this study were collected over a three-semester period from students enrolled in the Cooperative Education Program at Los Angeles Valley College. The population was 41 percent women and 59 percent men. Included in the survey were questions relating to

promotions, pay raises and how the student rated the overall Cooperative Education Program. The questionnaire (Appendix A) was completed by students at the close of each semester.

The evaluation form was completed by students during the final class session of each semester. No attempt was made, at that time, to contact students who were absent. The data collected were assembled by the Coordinator of Cooperative Education, and, therefore, available for this study.

VIII. PROCEDURES FOR TREATING THE DATA

The data collected were classified according to the observed ratings in the following manner:

1. Persons reporting the achievement of both a pay raise and a promotion were classified as "Successful."
2. Persons not reporting both a pay raise and a promotion (all others) were classified as "Unsuccessful."

The above two groups were then sub-divided according to how they rated the program. The divisions were:

3. Those students rating the program "Excellent."
4. Those students rating the program "Needs Improvement."

The data thus classified were of a nominal nature. The non-parametric technique of chi square was selected to compare the two groups of "Successful" and "Unsuccessful" students. The data collected from the Cooperative Education students are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1

Classification of Observed Ratings by Successful and Unsuccessful Cooperative Education Students

Classification	Successful	Unsuccessful	Total
Excellent	49	174	223
Needs Improvement	1	25	26
Total	50	199	249

A chi square value on the above data using one degree of freedom at a .05 level of significance was determined as follows:

$$X^2 = \sum \left[\frac{(fo - fe)^2}{fe} \right] = \frac{16}{45} + \frac{16}{178} + \frac{16}{5} + \frac{16}{21} = 4.41$$

In such a test a chi square value greater than the critical value of 3.84 was indicated to be confirmation of the hypothesis.

IX. DATA RESULTING FROM THE STUDY

The chi square value resulting from the data was 4.41. Therefore, the null-hypothesis must be rejected and the hypothesis accepted.

The classification of and ratings by students shown in Table 1 are also presented here in terms of percentage in order to enhance the interpretation of the data which follows. This is shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Classification of Observed Ratings by Successful and Unsuccessful Cooperative Education Students by Percent

Classification		Successful 20%	Unsuccessful 80%	Total 100%
Excellent	90%	98%	87%	
Needs Improvement	10%	2%	13%	
Total	100%	100%	100%	

X. CONCLUSIONS AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DATA

The critical value for the chi square test performed was 3.84. Because the chi square value from the data collected exceeded this amount, the original hypothesis was confirmed. Therefore, it is concluded that "Successful" students rate the program "Excellent" significantly more often than "Unsuccessful" students.

It is important, at this point, to emphasize that 87 percent of the "Unsuccessful" students rated the program as "Excellent." This clearly indicates that success on the job is not the only factor which may influence a student's evaluation of the program.

However, it should be noted that only one of the "Successful" students rated the program as "Needs Improvement." If just one more "Successful" student had rated the program as "Needs Improvement," the chi square value would have been 2.85 and the null-hypothesis confirmed. Hence, the significance of this study hinges on the evaluation of the program by one student. This fact must be noted. None-

the-less, this was not the case and the results of this study must stand. Additionally, while the "Successful" students do rate the program "Excellent" more often than "Unsuccessful" students, there is no evidence, at this time, that a cause and effect relationship exists.

The significance of this report upon the Cooperative Education Program is that pay raises and promotions are related to how students rate the Cooperative Education Program at Los Angeles Valley College. Therefore, skills of acquiring pay raises and promotions should be emphasized in the cooperative education classes.

The skills mentioned above are generally of two types. The first is common to almost all employment situations, namely personnel relations. Students who fail to recognize the basic realities of co-operation with people have little chance of achieving success regard-less of their technical competence. This is of key importance to entry level employees. This has always been one of the primary re-sponsibilities of the cooperative education instructor.

The second is concerned with technical skills. Through the instructor's exposure to the specific needs of students, relative to pay raises and promotions, revisions of curriculum, to better meet the needs of students, can be achieved. Such curriculum changes mean a more relevant educational experience.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the evaluation form be revised to in-clude the following questions:

1. Did the Cooperative Education Program, in any way, help you

obtain a pay raise and promotion?

2. Name three criteria that you feel indicate success on the job.

3. How might the Cooperative Education Program be improved?

Recommendations for Further Studies

It is recommended that a similar survey be made of employed students not enrolled in the Cooperative Education Program. This would help to determine if cooperative education students are more "successful" than other employed students at Los Angeles Valley College. Finally, employers of cooperative education students should be surveyed to determine if they feel that the program contributes to the success of the student on the job.

Institutional Significance

At Los Angeles Valley College the Cooperative Education Program has been in existence for three years. A rapid rate of growth has taken place in the past three semesters. A revision of many phases of the program is necessary. The program was originally designed for students in "entry level" positions and part-time employment but was expanded to include all types of employed students. This study has shown that increased emphasis should be placed on "up-grading" (i.e., promotion and pay raise) skills so that the student/employee, who has been working in a career job, can be helped in achieving "Success." The study has also pointed out that a revision of the questionnaire is needed. More pointed and comprehensive questions should be asked. The proposed revisions have been approved by the Dean of Instruction and the evaluation form is presently being

revised. This, together with further studies, will help make the program a more viable part of the college curriculum.

At West Los Angeles College the Cooperative Education Program is in the formative stages. It is anticipated that evaluation of the program by students will be a significant part of overall program evaluation. This study emphasizes the meaningful qualities of evaluation by students and suggests several questions which should be included in the evaluation form now being developed.

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APPENDIX A

COOPERATIVE EDUCATION JOB PLACEMENT REPORT

(PLEASE PRINT)

1. NAME (Last) (First) VETERAN
2. DATE(S) EMPLOYED a. From To Company
   b. From To Company
3. TYPE OF JOB a.
   b.
4. WERE YOU EMPLOYED THROUGH: Coop. Ed. LAVC Placement Office
   Because of LAVC Training Other
5. RATE THE COOP. ED. PROGRAM: Excellent Good Fair Needs Imp.
6. ATTAINED SUCCESS: Did you get a pay increase? Yes No
   Did you get a new learning experience? Yes No
   Did you move from a part-time job to a full-time job? Yes No
   Did you get a promotion? Yes No
   Was your grade point average any better after taking Coop. Ed.? Yes No
7. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

COOPERATIVE EDUCATION JOB PLACEMENT REPORT

(PLEASE PRINT)

1. NAME (Last) BELDING (First) MICHAEL VETERAN
2. DATE(S) EMPLOYED a. From 2-8-71 To DATE Company [illegible] Auto Supply
   b. From To Company
3. TYPE OF JOB a. AUTO PARTS SALESMAN
   b.
4. WERE YOU EMPLOYED THROUGH: Coop. Ed. LAVC Placement Office
   Because of LAVC Training Other X
5. RATE THE COOP. ED. PROGRAM: Excellent X Good Fair Needs Imp.
6. ATTAINED SUCCESS: Did you get a pay increase? Yes X No
   Did you get a new learning experience? Yes X No
   Did you move from a part-time job to a full-time job? Yes X No
   Did you get a promotion? Yes X No
   Was your grade point average any better after taking Coop. Ed.? Yes X No
7. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS: This class has been a real good learning experience for me!

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